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in an age of cruelty, intellectual in an age of sensualism, rational in an age of superstition, wearing his honored father's mantle with such affection that he tells us, "il semble m'envelopper de lui," — giving new vitality to his country's language, practical hints of wisdom in social economy, tranquil enjoyment, and domestic education, — entertaining and cheering, as well as illuminating, by his candid and docile pen; — thus beholding Montaigne, we do not wonder that, despite the neutral ground he occupied as an actor, and the comparative indifference he maintained as a writer, in the then convulsed spheres of religion and politics, a sentiment of blended love and admiration should invest his memory. Less dear to a party or a class, he is more so to the liberal and individual everywhere; because he was, as Bayle sums up his character, "humain par sentiment, tolerant par raison; bon et sensible; de mœurs douces et faciles, gentilhomme vain à la fois et simple, citoyen honnête." There is in the memory of Montaigne a flavor, and a use too, somewhat akin to the wine of his native district, which, compared with others, has less fire and more astringency, is not so liable to acidity, bears removal better, and, though it has not a very attractive aroma, is pronounced by hygienic connoisseurs the safest for daily use.

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ART. V. — *History of Civilization in England.* By HENRY THOMAS BUCKLE. Vol. I. pp. 854. London. 1857.

HISTORY, as usually written, is a narrative of events which are supposed to have been determined, in great measure, by chance, interspersed, perhaps, with the author's reflections. By Mr. Buckle, however, it is regarded as involving something higher and better than this. The events which it relates are never a matter of chance or supernatural interference, but are determined by laws as uniform and regular as those which govern the course of nature. To investigate these laws, and show their operation in determining the succession of events, is the worthiest function of the historian.

Mr. Buckle claims the merit of having discovered the principle which has played a part in human affairs, somewhat analogous to that of gravitation in the material world, combining and guiding them in such a manner as to insure the indefinite progress of the race. This primordial principle in all civilization is knowledge, and every increase of the one has been and ever will be followed by an advance in the other. Virtue and vice are not without some effect; advantages of situation, climate, and other physical conditions, have not been entirely fruitless; but none of these things have promoted civilization, except so far as they have increased the amount of knowledge and favored intellectual achievement.

In the development of this principle, Mr. Buckle has started a multitude of collateral questions, in the discussion of which he has displayed a minuteness of research and an amount and variety of knowledge seldom equalled, while the originality and boldness of his views, expressed with remarkable clearness and fervor, secure the admiration, if not the conviction, of the reader. Many of the current opinions of the time he has successfully assailed; but, notwithstanding the abundance of his resources, he has questioned some in a manner indicative of deficient information, rather than of an honest and well-founded scepticism. Some of his speculations we are constrained to notice, because, coming as they do under such authority, and enforced by uncommon graces of style, they are calculated to mislead the unwary reader as to the true sources of individual and national greatness.

The various races of men, as distinguished by naturalists, differ from one another not more in their physical constitution than in their mental development; and, from the earliest times, the opinion has prevailed that these two things are necessarily related to each other. To the question why the European is in advance of all other people, and the Australian behind them, no answer has been more general, or more satisfactory both to the wise and the simple, than the declaration of what seems to be an ultimate fact, namely, because he is a European or an Australian. They stand at opposite ends of the scale of humanity, simply because the qualities

of the species — those traits which, whether passing under the name of physical or mental, seem to spring from the constitution of the creature — exist in them in different degrees of perfection. The differences among the lower animals in point of docility or cunning are always referred to this cause, and no one disputes the correctness of the conclusion. If the organic laws of the human species are analogous to those of the inferior animals, it would seem an irresistible inference that the constitution which man has received from Nature must determine the mental qualities and the destinies of the race. To say, as Mr. Buckle says, that the Papuan infant has the same capability of improvement as the European infant, and that, reared together, they would, one with another, reach the same degree of proficiency, is a bold assertion, at variance with all the analogies of organic life and the prevailing impression among men. True, we have no special experiments on the subject. No considerable number of savage infants have been taken from their native abodes, and, from the cradle to the grave, subjected to all the influences of civilization; nor have any considerable number of European infants been consigned, in like manner, to the care and training of Hottentots or Australians. The accidental cases of this kind prove nothing, because they are too few to warrant any general conclusion. But the indisputable fact that the greatest advances in civilization have ever been made by the superior races, while many of the inferior races have always remained, to all appearance, at the very lowest grade of the savage state, certainly furnishes a presumption against the idea that the various races of men are equal in point of natural power and capacity. There is yet to be found the first savage tribe which, unaided and alone, has made the slightest advance in the scale of humanity beyond the point at which it originally started. Even when reared for many generations amidst all the influences of the highest civilization, their mental inferiority remains as conspicuous as it was in their native abodes. In this country, for more than two centuries, the negro race has been in close contact with the Anglo-Saxon, and of late, in the Northern States, has shared equally in all the blessings of government, education, and religion; yet who will ven-

ture to say that the distinction between them has been materially lessened thereby? For the same period, the North American Indian has witnessed the repeated triumphs of the pale-faces over the forces of nature, with scarcely a wish to share in the beneficent results. In these instances, climate and soil must obviously pass for nothing; but in physical organization, and especially in the size and conformation of the brain, these races differ from us, and here alone are we to look for an agency sufficient to explain the problem in question.

In all the arrangements of the animal frame, the general rule is that size is the measure of power. Large muscles imply great strength; a large sensorial apparatus, admitting extensive nervous expansions, is indicative of the higher qualities of the sense; an ample development of the heart or lungs gives assurance of corresponding capacity in the functions which they fulfil. The brain furnishes no exception to the general rule. That it is necessary in some way or other to the mental manifestations, no one doubts. The only question is as to the nature and extent of this connection. Taking into view the various races and different individuals of the same race, we are warranted in laying down the general principle, that, the greater the quantity of brain, the greater is the amount of mental power and capability. This is the result of observation, as carefully and extensively made as any other in natural science. The apparent exceptions to this principle should be regarded as such exceptions always are in other departments of science,—as cases which need only to be thoroughly understood to be found in perfect harmony with the general arrangement.

In thus ignoring altogether what must take the precedence of all other causes of mental development, Mr. Buckle is necessarily led to attribute an undue importance to certain physical influences in favoring this result. The error is a serious one in a philosophical history of civilization, and leads us in the outset to distrust the politico-economical theories, derived from his views on this subject, which bear a prominent part in his philosophy. He must excuse us for wondering that one, generally so thorough in his investigations,

should adopt extreme opinions in regard to a matter of observation, ignorant apparently of the best works upon it, and quoting no authority save that of John Mill, who says, "Of all vulgar modes of escaping from the consideration of the effect of moral and social influences on the human mind, the most vulgar is that of attributing the diversities of conduct and character to inherent natural differences." If a single authority is to reverse the almost unanimous verdict of scientific men on a question so practical as this, we should have been better satisfied with that of a Cuvier or an Agassiz.

Mr. Buckle has as little faith in the transmission by hereditary descent of moral and physical qualities, or even of diseases, as he has in the agency of race in advancing civilization, and about as little ground for his scepticism. By shutting out all such influences, he would, no doubt, afford freer play for the crowning principle of his philosophy, — that the increase and the diffusion of knowledge, favored by happy opportunities of soil and climate, are the sole agents in the great work of civilization. To admit different degrees of native capability would curtail the potency of his favorite agencies, and thus spoil the proportions of a very comely theory. In no other way can we account for the singular fact of his overlooking almost every contribution to our knowledge on the subject of hereditary transmission. The long list of works which he has consulted contains nothing of the kind; yet certainly the course of his reading must have made him acquainted with the current opinions of scientific men, and with many of the prominent facts. It is difficult to conceive how, in common intercourse with the world, one can well help observing illustrations of this physiological law, as distinctly marked as those of any other natural law. We have been in the habit of believing that the hereditary character of insanity, for instance, is as well established as any other fact in the whole range of natural science. The records of every hospital for the insane will show that, in a large proportion of cases, — from one to two thirds, — the disease, or tendency to the disease, existed in the progenitors. A similar fact has been observed in regard to gout, scrofula, and some other maladies.

Mr. Buckle thinks that the existence of the same disease in parent and child does not warrant the inference that it has been transmitted, because, if original in one, it might be in the other, with no necessary connection between them. Certainly it might, and if the case happened only occasionally, it would furnish little ground for the doctrine of hereditary transmission; but, occurring as it does in so large a proportion of instances, the inference is irresistible that there is a connection of cause and effect in the matter,—in other words, that the disease is transmitted. If it is also found that the comparatively few families in which the disease has once appeared furnish a larger number of cases than the comparatively many not thus tainted, then the question is settled. The fact that the infirmity of the parent is frequently not transmitted to all or any of his descendants, does not prove that it is never so transmitted. As well might we say that similarity of feature in parent and child is entirely accidental, indicating no hereditary quality, merely because instances are not uncommon in which the lineaments of the parent can scarcely be traced in his offspring, as well as instances where resemblance may be observed between persons not related to each other. All we can say about it—and this is the ultimate conclusion of science—is, that the law of descent is not inflexible in its operations, as if nature were not bound implicitly to repeat its defects. It is the part of true philosophy rather to recognize the law, and to admire the beneficent arrangement whereby its terrible consequences are alleviated, than to doubt its existence. This is one of those things in regard to which doubt is far from being a proof of superior sagacity.

Following the leadings of his general theory, Mr. Buckle also declares that the transmission of moral and intellectual qualities has never been proved. We have no right, he thinks, to infer that a mental peculiarity is bequeathed, merely because it exists in parent and child; for we ought to inquire, “not only how many instances there are of hereditary talents, etc., but how many instances there are of such qualities not being hereditary.” Inasmuch as mental peculiarities are connected with bodily constitution, we are bound

to believe that they follow the same law of hereditary transmission. Our author's reasoning might satisfy the ignorant farmer, who, acting blindly on the principle that like produces like, nevertheless sees all his attempts to improve his stock utterly unsuccessful; but not a Bakewell, who would point to his improved stock obtained by the skilful application of the same principle. The proper mode of dealing with such a case is to receive the positive facts as presumptive proof, and the negative ones as merely indicative of some conditions unknown or not understood. Mr. Buckle's opinion is not without some color of truth. Great genius, extraordinary talent, is seldom transmitted. Virtue and vice often set at naught all the laws of hereditary descent. The saint gives birth to a sinner, and the process of genesis is ever evolving the sharpest of moral contrasts. Still, the dullest observer cannot fail to see occasionally the parent and child distinguished by the same mental peculiarity; and, where a peculiar talent is not transmitted, yet its occurrence often marks a step in the process of cerebral development, the influence of which may be clearly traced in succeeding generations. It may be thought by those whose studies lie in a very different direction, that we are dwelling on an unimportant point. But, believing as we do that one most efficient means of elevating the race is to be found in the improvement of the bodily organism,—in freeing it from taints of disease and accidental imperfection, in increasing the delicacy of its tissues, and developing its forms to the highest possible degree of strength and beauty,—we cannot help regarding Mr. Buckle's errors on this subject as deserving of explicit refutation. When we consider how much the short-comings of men proceed from constitutional defects, how many crimes and moral obliquities may be justly charged to the vitiating influences of scrofula, rickets, epilepsy, and insanity upon the qualities of the brain, how many lives full of promise have been shortened in consequence of defective stamina, how many noble undertakings have been frustrated by attacks of disease which the normal energies of the human frame would have resisted, we are constrained to place the improvement of the bodily organism among the most potent agencies for advancing the



moral and intellectual condition of the race. Were the race subjected to the application of the art of breeding which has so much improved some of the domestic animals, we should unquestionably witness similar results. Were all men properly housed, fed, and clothed, and their conduct and intercourse governed by the rules of a true hygiene, no one will deny that a great improvement would be made in the physical condition and capability of the race. All this may never be effected, but the principle is none the less true.

Having disposed of the influence of race and of hereditary transmission, Mr. Buckle is left with an open field for the play of his favorite agents of civilization, — soil, climate, and the general aspects of nature. Their *modus operandi*, unfolded with great fulness and felicity of illustration, is substantially this. A fertile soil and a warm climate induce an abundance of food, which is followed by an abundant population and cheap labor. The latter favors the accumulation of wealth, which enables the classes that possess it to devote a portion of their time to mental cultivation; and thus is accomplished the first step in the process of civilization. In proof of this theory, we are referred to Egypt and India in the Old World, and Mexico and Peru in the New. These early seats of civilization combined in the highest degree the physical incidents necessary to develop the best qualities of the race, and in Mr. Buckle's hands they furnish admirable exemplifications of the general theory. That those incidents were efficient instrumentalities in producing the results in question, we are willing to concede; but that they were the sole and exclusive agencies we cannot admit, until it is shown that every other is necessarily excluded. The influence of race, which has hitherto borne a prominent part in theories of civilization, Mr. Buckle, as we have just seen, entirely ignores, as if unworthy of notice. The very point most open to attack is precisely that which he has not even attempted to strengthen. To make his conclusions quite satisfactory, he should have adduced some instances where the same results have been accomplished by people belonging to the inferior races. In the absence of such proof, the reader must be pardoned if he infers that it could not be found, — an inference amply

supported by facts. In that immense territory which stretches from the Cape of Good Hope to the Great Desert, and is bounded on both sides by the ocean, not a single tribe has been discovered exhibiting the first advance in civilization. We are still imperfectly acquainted with the physical geography of that portion of Africa, but in many of the regions into which travellers have penetrated the soil and climate are adapted to the most abundant production. With such testimony and all the analogies of physical geography before us, we cannot believe that nearly the whole of that vast continent is entirely destitute of those physical conditions which alone can enable the race to rise from the depths of its original barbarity. In this respect, much of it, we know, would not suffer in comparison with India, where the industry and ingenuity of man have been freely tasked in order to meet those meteorological defects which oppose an abundant production. The dikes of Holland are not more necessary to its national existence, than the reservoirs of water constructed at great expense for the purpose of artificial irrigation are to the agricultural productiveness of the Carnatic. We are no better satisfied with the application of the theory to the New World. Mexico and Peru are not the only parts of it which combine the conditions most favorable to the production of food. The West India islands are unrivalled in every condition which Mr. Buckle regards as favorable to civilization, but we look in vain for any traces of this effect.

Tried by another test, the theory is no better supported by the facts of the case. We naturally turn to those nations which are supposed to have led the van of civilization, as the Phœnicians and the Greeks, who at an early age diffused their light over the South of Europe, the North of Africa, and the western parts of Asia Minor. In none of their ancient abodes do we find any extraordinary fertility of soil or superiority of climate. What we do find, however, is, that they were always restless, roving nations, moved by love of enterprise and adventure, and by the force of their indomitable nature conquering wherever they went. In the New World, too, there is much reason to believe that the civilization of

Mexico and Peru originated farther north. At any rate, it was probably not in advance of that of Central America, which in physical advantages is scarcely equal to those countries.

The New World has been the theatre of another experiment, far more to the point, which proves that human progress is determined by an influence greater than that of soil or climate. The colonization of America by the various nations of Europe shows us on a large scale the play of every possible physical influence having any tendency to advance or retard the development of the human faculties; and if Mr. Buckle's theory is correct, we see no reason why it should not have been strikingly exemplified here. If the physical peculiarities of Mexico and Peru did so much for the Toltecs, it is a fair question why they should not have done still more for the Spaniards, who were better prepared for their genial influences by a higher state of culture. They found a fertile soil and cheap labor. Riches rapidly accumulated in the hands of the few, and hardship and degradation became the lot of the many. Here were all the sources of that wealth and leisure and power, which, according to Mr. Buckle, are essential elements of human progress. Did the Spaniards advance under these favoring influences? Did the wealthy classes use their leisure in cultivating the arts and sciences, and preparing for a higher destiny? Not at all. If the Spanish American occupies a little higher point in the scale of civilization than he did three hundred years ago, he is indebted for it more to others than to himself. At a later period, some English adventurers planted themselves in another region of the New World, where Nature had diffused her bounties so sparingly, that existence could be maintained only by an incessant struggle with the elements; and yet from this struggle was evolved a national character containing the elements of progress, in a manner unrivalled in the history of the race. Here was no leisure, labor was dear, and everybody worked.

Mr. Buckle himself seems to have some misgivings respecting the soundness of his theory, when he says that advantages of soil and climate have been most efficient when com-

bined in such a manner as to require of man some excitement of his energies. This was necessary in order to explain certain phases of European civilization. What was lacking in the fertility of the soil was fully compensated, in some cases, by a climate which rendered labor comparatively easy and efficient. But even this does not furnish the *primum mobile*, the inducement to labor. In a state of barbarism, to which the theory is supposed to apply, sustenance can be obtained with little or no labor, and there can be no object beyond this. Original inequalities between man and man might possibly furnish the required starting-point; but in Mr. Buckle's philosophy such inequalities of mind are not admitted, and those of body cannot be perpetuated.

All this fanciful speculation, ably and beautifully developed, we acknowledge, is put forward to account for results which are far more satisfactorily explained by the doctrine of different races,—a doctrine which is supported by all the analogies of nature, and against which Mr. Buckle does not pretend to offer a single argument. We must, therefore, adhere to our old faith, that those nations which have been distinguished by their advances in civilization have belonged to the superior races, endowed with a finer organization and a larger cerebral development.

Another of Mr. Buckle's cardinal principles is the supremacy of the intellectual over the moral faculties in the process of civilization, and he pushes it to a startling extreme. With him the intellect does almost everything; the moral sentiments, nothing. The latter give rise to pleasing relations among individuals, but do not advance the race.

"All the great moral systems which have exercised much influence, have been fundamentally the same; all the great intellectual systems have been fundamentally different. In reference to our moral conduct, there is not a single principle now known to the most cultivated Europeans, which was not likewise known to the ancients."—p. 164.

"To do good to others; to sacrifice for their benefit your own wishes; to love your neighbor as yourself; to forgive your enemies; to restrain your passions; to honor your parents; to respect those who are set over you,—these and a few others are the sole essentials of morals; but they have been known for thousands of years, and not one jot or tittle has been added to them by all the sermons, homilies, and

text-books which moralists and theologians have been able to produce." — p. 163.

"The acquisitions made by the intellect are, in every civilized country, carefully preserved, registered in certain well-understood formulas, and protected by the use of technical and scientific language; they are easily handed down from one generation to another, and thus, assuming an accessible, or as it were a tangible form, they often influence the most distant posterity, they become the heirlooms of mankind, the immortal bequest of the genius to which they owe their birth. But the good deeds effected by our moral faculties are less capable of transmission; they are of a more private and retiring character; while, as the motives to which they owe their origin are generally the result of self-discipline and of self-sacrifice, they have to be worked out by every man for himself; and thus, begun by each anew, they derive but little benefit from the maxims of preceding experience, nor can they well be stored up for the use of future moralists. The consequence is, that although moral excellence is more amiable, and to most persons more attractive, than intellectual excellence, still, it must be confessed that, looking at ulterior results, it is far less active, less permanent, and, as I shall presently prove, less productive of real good. Indeed, if we examine the effects of the most active philanthropy, and of the largest and most disinterested kindness, we shall find that those effects are, comparatively speaking, short-lived; that there is only a small number of individuals they come in contact with and benefit; that they rarely survive the generation that witnessed their commencement; and that, when they take the more durable form of founding great public charities, such institutions invariably fall, first into abuse, then into decay, and after a time are either destroyed, or perverted from their original intention, mocking the effort by which it is vainly attempted to perpetuate the memory even of the purest and most energetic benevolence." — p. 165.

"The actions of bad men produce only temporary evil, the actions of good men only temporary good; and eventually, the good and the evil altogether subside, are neutralized by subsequent generations, absorbed by the incessant movement of future ages. But the discoveries of great men never leave us; they are immortal, they contain those eternal truths which survive the shock of empires, outlive the struggles of rival creeds, and witness the decay of successive religions. All these have their different measures and their different standards; one set of opinions for one age, another set for another. They pass away like a dream; they are as the fabric of a vision, which leaves not a rack behind. The discoveries of genius alone remain; it is to them we owe

all that we now have ; they are for all ages and all times ; never young, and never old, they bear the seeds of their own life ; they flow on in a perennial and undying stream ; they are essentially cumulative, and, giving birth to the additions which they subsequently receive, they thus influence the most distant posterity, and after the lapse of centuries produce more effect than they were able to do even at the moment of their promulgation." — p. 206.

Whatever may be thought of Mr. Buckle's views, all will admire the vigor and elegance with which they are expressed. But something more than rhetoric is required to sweep away the instinctive convictions of men, although, confident in the strength of his logic, and seduced, probably, by the very simplicity of his theory, he declares that it cannot be refuted. It is difficult, certainly, to refute a philosophical statement the terms of which are somewhat indefinite, and especially one like this, where any difference of opinion must refer not so much to the principle involved as to the extent of its application. The general doctrine of the supremacy of the intellect in the process of civilization may be true ; but the coloring here given to it is calculated to inspire a stoical indifference to virtue and vice, and a love of intellectual distinction abstracted entirely from the moral complexion of its objects. If virtue and vice are so ephemeral, and if purely intellectual achievements alone are immortal, and capable of affecting the destinies of the race, then a powerful incentive to virtue is taken away. Honor, purity, truth, and benevolence are degraded to a secondary rank in the scale of motives for the conduct of life, and love of intellectual excellence becomes the only sentiment worth cherishing. To all this it might be enough to say, that the inestimable worth of morality in promoting, not only the good of the individual, but that of the race, is so strongly rooted in the common sense of mankind, that this fact alone furnishes strong presumptive evidence against the doctrine ; but we are willing to give it the benefit of a careful examination.

Briefly, the argument, aside from the dazzling rhetoric by which it is enforced, is this. Civilization is a variable product, low at one period, high at another, and consequently must depend on causes of a variable character. Inasmuch as

moral truths have been stationary for some thousands of years, while the field of knowledge has been greatly extended, it follows that the variable effect could have been produced only by a variable cause. The fault in this logic is, that the premise involves a sophism which vitiates the conclusion. Undoubtedly, certain great truths of morality were as well recognized ages ago as they are now, and if they failed to make men good, it was not altogether from lack of knowledge or of intellectual activity. Yet right and wrong, duty, benevolence, and the like, are relative terms, and the opinions and practice of the world respecting them differ at different times. What seems to be good and right at one time, is regarded as bad and wrong at another. Why this change? Mr. Buckle attributes it chiefly to intellectual advancement, and very little, if at all, to moral truths, because they, being unchangeable, cannot account for a variable effect. A startling notion like this ought at the least to have been stated in precise and definite language; but in the passages above quoted, as well as in many others, there is a confusion of terms quite fatal to the force of the argument. A great moral truth is one thing; the influence which it is allowed to exert over the conduct of men is another. To do good to others, to love your neighbor as yourself, to forgive your enemies, — these are injunctions neither more nor less correct than they were ages ago. Indeed, their correctness has never been questioned. And yet the extent to which they have governed the actions of men has been very limited at best, and, judging merely from the conduct of individuals and of nations, it would hardly be supposed that they had even been theoretically admitted. On the whole, however, there has been some moral improvement, attributable solely to the intellectual faculties, according to our author, the moral having no self-originating power, and being entirely passive in the operation.

Thus, through all his reasoning on this subject, Mr. Buckle indulges in the curious fancy of regarding moral truths as utterly inoperative in the process of civilization, simply because for thousands of years they have remained without increase or diminution. It is the first time that we have ever seen the unquestionable truth of a great principle — its endurance

from age to age, without losing one tittle of its significance — adduced as a conclusive proof of its having exerted no influence upon the human condition. It is for the very reason that those great moral truths have remained unaffected by the changing fashions of philosophy, by the various phases of intellectual progress, or by any of the vicissitudes of the race, that they are to be regarded as no subordinate agents in the work of human advancement. Let us suppose that they had possessed a very different character; — that their correctness had been admitted in one age and doubted in another; that they had been admired and promulgated by one school of sages, and derided and trodden under foot by another; that they were as devoid of stability and sanction as the wildest speculations of philosophy; — then, certainly, it might be contended, with some show of reason, that causes so unstable and untrustworthy could have had but little to do with so mighty a result as the advancement of the race through the successive stages of civilization.

According to Mr. Buckle, individuals, whether good or bad, have no appreciable effect upon the progress of civilization, upon which they are borne passively along, like the tiny boats which children launch upon the stream. The profligacy of a Nero and the virtue of a Trajan make no permanent impression on the great tidal movement in which they are presently engulfed. Though the one might seem likely to benefit the race, and to impart some force to the movement itself, yet it is counterbalanced by the other, and both are brought to naught. What is true of virtue and vice in particular, is also true of the mental faculties from which they spring.

“The actions of individuals are greatly affected by their moral feelings, and by their passions; but these, being antagonistic to the passions and feelings, are balanced by them; so that their effect is, in the great average of human affairs, nowhere to be seen; and the total actions of mankind, considered as a whole, are left to be regulated by the total knowledge of which mankind is possessed.” — p. 208.

The familiar truism, that virtue hastens and vice retards the march of human improvement, would hardly have answered our author's purpose, and so he qualifies it by a dis-



covery of his own, that they are so nicely balanced as completely to neutralize each other's effect. By what means virtue and vice can be so accurately measured as to warrant this extraordinary conclusion, he does not inform us ; indeed, he admits that the evidence on the subject remains to be collected. He thinks the fact is illustrated, however, by the statistics of crime, which show that, one year with another, the amount of crime in any community presents a remarkable uniformity. We must confess we are unable to see the connection of the two things. Uniformity of effect only proves uniformity of cause. So much crime indicates the existence of so much vice ; and it might also indicate the existence of so much virtue, if virtue and vice were each the negative of the other. Such may be the case among savage tribes ; but surely the amount of virtue in a civilized community is indicated by other tests than the brevity of the criminal calendar. One has but to open his eyes to see them in every direction. Side by side with the haunts of infamy and crime stand noble establishments for the relief of suffering and the elevation of men. Mingled together in the thoroughfares of life are the votary of pleasure and the philanthropist, revolving schemes of beneficence. The same squad of juvenile outcasts contains one taking the first steps in a life-long career of vice, and another denying himself and devoting his hard earnings to the support of a suffering mother or sister. Indeed, there is a touch of the ludicrous in the idea of looking into the records of our criminal courts to ascertain the amount of self-conflict, self-sacrifice, and active benevolence existing in the community ; and yet this seems to be a legitimate deduction from Mr. Buckle's illustration.

There is another aspect of the statistical proof in regard to which we are left in doubt. The mutually neutralizing influence of virtue and vice is put forth as an abstract truth, illustrated by the uniform amount of crime. It follows, therefore, that the diminution of crime is impossible in the nature of things, because it would imply that, in the conflict of moral forces, virtue had got the better of vice, and consequently, that the theory in question was clearly disproved. If these inferences are correct, then the philanthropist who seeks to

remove the temptations to crime, and the legislator and jurist who are striving to improve the criminal law, have a discouraging prospect before them.

The effect of great moral truths upon human progress is to be estimated by their influence upon human conduct. The real question at issue is, not whether these truths have been enlarged and multiplied, but whether their application in the practical business of life is or is not, on the whole, extending. Obviously, the question cannot be settled by demonstrative proof; we must look for the answer chiefly in the prevailing belief, we had almost said, the instinctive convictions of mankind. Upon such authority, then, we do not hesitate to say that all truth, whether intellectual or moral, contains within itself a principle of power and perpetuity. Circumstances determine the sphere of its operation; narrow at one time, large at another; apparent to the watchful, far-reaching vision, overlooked by the dull, grovelling sense. With an affinity for all the higher qualities of the soul, it is, like them, indestructible and immortal; and when, to all appearance, laid aside and forgotten, it is only "embalmed and treasured up to a life beyond life." The great moral truths mentioned by Mr. Buckle have shed their light over the pathway of the ages; and though, at times, it has been more like the cold effulgence of the moon than the quickening and invigorating rays of the sun, yet it has always enabled the soul to discern the loftier heights to which it might aspire. The good to which they have prompted, even the most insignificant particle thereof, is never lost; but whether isolated and marked, or mingled with the common mass of beneficent influences, it never ceases to produce its appropriate effects. The force of example, too, appealing to that mysterious principle of our nature called sympathy or imitation, is beyond the reach of calculation, and yet Mr. Buckle ignores it altogether. Who can estimate the amount of patriotism and heroic daring that has been inspired by the names of Marathon, Bannockburn, and Bunker Hill, — names that have done more for freedom than all the discoveries of the intellect? Who will say that some of the strongest elements of the New England character did not originate in the constancy of that pilgrim band whom the

most appalling forms of danger and suffering could not daunt? When Aristides said of a proposal to strike a blow at a formidable rival, that nothing could be more advantageous or less honorable, did the noble utterance perish with the breath that formed it, balanced and neutralized by some ignoble reply which has not come down to us? Has it not rather been treasured up like a pearl of great price, in the pages of the historian and sage, thus conveying to remotest times the lesson that national honor is a better thing than gain or glory? The character and career of Washington, — are they destined to impart no impulse to human affairs because an Arnold was guilty of treachery? On the contrary, the time will never come when they shall cease to animate the desponding patriot, wherever he may be, to rebuke the schemes of ambition, and to uphold the sinking faith of men in political honor and purity.

In proof of his theory of the supremacy of the intellectual powers in promoting civilization, Mr. Buckle adduces the fact that wars have become less frequent, and their practices less barbarous, solely, as he alleges, in consequence of the greater diffusion of knowledge; and he illustrates the position by the historical fact, that war has been often waged in order to procure or prevent certain advantages of trade. But, thanks to the prevalence of sounder views of political economy! such a *casus belli* is removed for ever. If the explanation were quite correct, which is somewhat doubtful, it would be very far from proving the general principle that all wars originate in ignorance; or, if Mr. Buckle likes it better, that the comparative infrequency of wars in modern times is one of the results of the spread of knowledge. It may not be obvious, at first sight, how this point can be made out; or, in other words, what kind of ignorance it is which is so closely connected with war. The evils of war, certainly, have been clearly discerned from the earliest times. Its waste of life and treasure, its demoralizing influence upon the belligerents, the desolation and wretchedness that follow in its track, were as obvious in the days of Alexander as in those of Bonaparte. No discovery of science, no effort of the intellect, has revealed new horrors, or deepened the impression made by old horrors. We are unable to see what special enlightenment was needed

by Louis XIV., to prevent his reign from being an unceasing outrage on the rights of his neighbors; or in what department of knowledge Frederick of Prussia was particularly deficient, while carrying his victorious arms in every direction. Mr. Buckle admits as much as this, and even states it in stronger terms, but avoids its legitimate effect by the poorest of quibbles. The kind of knowledge just referred to as having thrown no new light on the evils of war, he calls "moral knowledge," and places it, of course, in the same category with moral truths, which, being stationary, could have had no part in the production of a variable effect. The new intellectual forces to which he attributes the present infrequency of wars consist in the sounder notions respecting the balance of trade that have prevailed in modern times, in the invention of gunpowder, and in the discoveries respecting steam as a locomotive power. We would not deny that these things have helped, in some small degree, to diminish the number of wars; but they have very little to do with the really efficient cause of the evil, as obvious at this moment as it ever was. As we read the history of the race, the belligerent spirit has been cherished, not by false theories or deficient knowledge, but by the selfish sentiments, if not by the criminal passions; by the cravings of unoccupied, restless minds for excitement; by pride of opinion; by the lust of glory; by the necessity of dazzling the minds of the people and diverting them from dangerous reflections. Mr. Buckle may say, perhaps, that a more comprehensive and practical wisdom, better views of the policy of nations, more of that intellectual discernment which would have foreseen the miserable end of all such strife,—but little less miserable to the conquerors than to the conquered,—would have restrained these passions, and induced the parties concerned to keep the peace. In some degree, perhaps, this might have been the case; but so long as the passions are unchecked by the influence of those great moral truths which bear so insignificant a part in Mr. Buckle's philosophy, they will, in the long run, predominate over all considerations of prudence. The highwayman sees the gallows at the end of his career as clearly as everybody else, and it is with nations very much as it is with individuals. If wars

have been less frequent of late years, it is to be attributed chiefly to the greater activity of the higher sentiments; to a livelier sense of moral accountability among rulers and people; to the growing conviction that war is really legalized murder on the largest scale. But the time is far distant, we imagine, in spite of the increasing diffusion of knowledge, when the savage nature will entirely cease to break through all the environments of moral restraint, and slake its thirst for blood. How long is it since the legislature of a people fond of calling itself pre-eminently free and enlightened, presented the saddening spectacle of members from every party and section vying with one another in arousing the belligerent spirit, and clamoring for measures calculated to provoke a conflict, the consequences of which, in every possible form of ruin, no man can adequately estimate?

Another prodigious evil, considerably diminished during the present century, illustrates our view of the matter in a still stronger manner, and therefore deserves a moment's attention, though not alluded to by Mr. Buckle. We refer to the abolition of the slave-trade by Great Britain and America. It cannot be denied that the horrors of the traffic were as well understood in the early as in the latter part of the last century. The progress of knowledge had supplied no new facts in the mental or physical condition of the negro; no form of labor had been found more profitable in slaveholding countries than the thews and sinews of man; no flood of light had burst on the vision of Clarkson and Wilberforce, not vouchsafed to humbler eyes. But the time had come when the various humanizing and refining influences of the age had so quickened the moral sense of the community, that, in the struggle which it maintained with prescription, self-interest, and pride of opinion, it finally prevailed. The conflict, be it observed, was not between ignorance and knowledge, but between the national conscience thoroughly aroused from its torpor, and that jealousy of innovation and that regard for material interests and vested rights which have resisted reforms of every kind, in every age. Mr. Buckle would probably say that it was the progress of knowledge which produced this higher tone of moral sentiment; but the propo-

sition is one of those "glittering generalities" which fail to prove anything to the critical inquirer. If the idea conveyed by it is that discoveries in astronomy, or chemistry, or geology, in metaphysics or political economy, had anything to do with the abolition of the slave-trade, even the most indirectly, we only say it is unworthy of refutation. If, on the contrary, this increase and diffusion of knowledge are supposed to embrace a wider recognition of the rightful claims of humanity, as well as every advance in the arts and amenities of life, we certainly should not dissent from the proposition; but it looks very much like an abandonment of the theory.

A similar confusion of ideas as to the relation of cause and effect pervades much of our author's reasoning on the sources of human progress. Civilization, he says, is not a product of government; for this is only an expression of the will of the people, which is determined by their education, which is only a result of the general intellectual development. This is hardly better than the Indian cosmogony of the earth standing on an elephant, and the elephant on a tortoise. In Mr. Buckle's philosophy, this intellectual development seems to play the part of an independent entity, but its qualities are not very accurately described. It is not government, it is not religion, it is not education, it is not literature, it is not morality. These are emphatically declared to be only some of its results. Granting him his premises, conceding to him his favorite notion of an insulated starting-point, we readily admit the logical sequence of his subsequent steps. But such an initial point looks more like a poetical fancy than a well-established matter of fact. By the common sense of mankind, civilization has always been regarded as the general expression of the combined influences of government, education, religion, science, art, and whatever else tends to improve the human condition. We have no warrant for regarding any one of them as the parent and regulator of all the rest. Good education leads to good government, and good government favors the cause of education. The passions and pursuits of men mould the literature of the times, and literature, in its turn, becomes a powerful instrument in elevating or degrading the character of the age. It is impos-

sible to analyze their respective forces and to determine the exact measure of each; still less, to trace them back by a sort of lineal ascent to some primordial, self-existent force.

Printers, it is said, are bound to follow their copy, though it go out of the window. It must be under some such desperate necessity that Mr. Buckle arrives at the conclusion that moral excellence, uncontrolled by knowledge, produces more evil than good; that is, the better an ignorant man is, — the more sincere, the more active, and the more enthusiastic in his beneficence, — the worse it is for the world; and the mischief can be abated only by mixing some alloy with his motives, — by playing off his selfishness against his ignorance. That we may do our author no injustice, we will transcribe his own words.

“There is no instance on record of an ignorant man who, having good intentions, and supreme power to enforce them, has not done far more evil than good. And whenever the intentions have been very eager, and the power very extensive, the evil has been enormous. But if you can diminish the sincerity of that man, if you can mix some alloy with his motives, you will likewise diminish the evil which he works. If he is selfish as well as ignorant, it will often happen that you may play off his vice against his ignorance, and by exciting his fears restrain his mischief. If, however, he has no fear, if he is entirely unselfish, if his sole object is the good of others, if he pursues that object with enthusiasm, upon a large scale, and with disinterested zeal, then it is that you have no check upon him, you have no means of preventing the calamities which, in an ignorant age, an ignorant man will be sure to inflict.” — p. 166.

If Mr. Buckle were writing an essay on the evils of ignorance, this might be a pardonable flourish of rhetoric; but in a philosophical theory of civilization by a writer of unquestionable ability, it can only excite our wonder and mortification. It needed no prophet to tell us that ignorant persons, in executing their benevolent designs, often do more harm than good; but Mr. Buckle has given the principle a wider sweep by far than the facts will warrant. In proof of his position, he adduces the history of religious persecution, which has often been the work of worthy men actuated by the holiest motives, and seeking to accomplish the highest

possible good. Thus the Spanish Inquisitors were remarkable for their undeviating integrity, and their historian, a bitter enemy, does not deny the purity of their intentions. This may be true so far as it goes, but it is not a very comprehensive view of the matter. Religious persecutors may sincerely believe that, in burning a heretic, they are thereby preventing the spread of doctrines which insure the eternal damnation of all who embrace them. But such revolting conclusions as this are seldom the product of a single motive. By looking a little beneath the surface, we shall always see that a variety of motives are really in operation,—that a regard for the honor and glory of God is mingled somewhat with regard for the honor and glory of men,—that a little selfishness, in fact, is played off against the benevolence, but, unhappily, without softening the result. We challenge any one to produce a single instance of religious persecution, in which the pride of sect, the pride of power, and the pride of opinion were not more active elements than any fancied regard for the souls of men. The Spanish Inquisitors, representing in one of its highest functions the Church which for more than a thousand years had shaped the policy of the Christian world,—which, in the exercise of its iron will, had trodden on the necks of princes and wielded a power more effective than the armies of king or emperor,—which had gathered the wealth of many generations into its coffers, and sent its missionaries to the uttermost parts of the earth,—those proud officials found that there were men who despised the vanities of their ceremonial, denied their right to control the consciences of others, and were determined to go to heaven without their assistance or permission; and the fact filled them with indignation and wrath. They saw in it an insult to the majesty of the Church, and, reflectively, to themselves, worthy of the severest punishment. Had Philip II. and his spiritual advisers been assured by a revelation from on high, that Protestantism might prevail throughout his dominions without necessarily endangering the salvation of a single soul, does any one believe that the fires of persecution would have been allowed to slacken? Had the Puritans of Massachusetts been assured, on the same authority, that the Quakers and Baptists might be safely per-



mitted to worship God in their own way, and bear their testimony against the prevalent faith, does any one suppose that Quakers would not have been hanged, or whipped at the cart's tail, and that Roger Williams would not have been banished to Rhode Island? One can know but little of the springs of action, who supposes that the mass of mankind can be placed, by any practicable degree of religious excellence, beyond the reach of pride, vanity, and ambition.

Supplementary to the general course of his reasoning, our author pursues an inquiry into the influence of religion, government, and literature upon civilization, and concludes that they are rather its creatures than its creators. The people form their religion, government, and literature, and these — whatever their condition — only indicate the progress the people have made. If he had been contented with saying that a people will never possess institutions much better than themselves, simply because much difference in this respect would involve an incompatibility, he would have uttered — except so far as the remark applies to Christianity — a well-founded truth. But to contend that the institutions exert no influence, for good or for ill, on the people, is only to fly in the face of facts, and the common opinion of mankind. The best of them represent the character of the best class of minds, and, of course, their natural tendency is to elevate the character of the inferior classes. Here, too, as in every other department of nature, action and reaction are simultaneous, and yet the latter operation our author has overlooked altogether. Unquestionably, the character of a people determines the tone of its literature; but he must be a very superficial observer who does not see that literature, in its turn, exerts a powerful effect on the character of the people. In the earlier ages, when its legitimate effect was less obscured by disturbing causes, this was too apparent to be overlooked for a moment. The love of country, devotion to liberty, and admiration of heroic deeds, were embalmed in the verses of the poets; and who shall say that to the impression thus made on the national mind the world is in no wise indebted for the glorious examples of Thermopylæ and Marathon? "Give me the making of the people's songs," said a Grecian sage,

“and you may make their laws.” If we do not greatly mistake Mr. Buckle's doctrine, he would have us believe that Milton and Shakespeare and Scott have contributed nothing to the advance of civilization, however much they may have helped to while away the leisure of many an idle hour. Our readers would hardly thank us for the formal refutation of such a doctrine ; but it shows to what strange conclusions a man may be led who surrenders himself a willing captive to the seductions of a pet theory.

In his views of the relations of government to civilization, our author is more fortunate, and his remarks may be profitably considered in an age when government is supposed to possess some sovereign virtue over and above that which is imparted to it by the people themselves. Even the terrible experience of the last seventy or eighty years has failed to show the lamentable folly of the notion, that forms of government may be put on and put off like a garment ; and that the people who, in some way or other, have obtained a good government, have fulfilled their political destiny. Ten years ago the people of France expelled a king under whose rule they had enjoyed life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, as they never had before ; and the Senate of the United States, with a political sagacity worthy of the act itself, congratulated them on the auspicious change, which speedily conducted them to an iron despotism. The doctrine in question is one of those stupidities which pass current for wisdom. Worthy of only the lowest order of demagogues, it has crept into the high places of society, and formed the staple of countless books and speeches on government and legislation. The old doctrine of the divine right of kings is exchanged for another scarcely less absurd,—the divine right of certain forms of government. Misled by experiments, superficial minds attribute to the rulers and the laws what is actually owing to qualities inherent in the character of the people, and suppose that a panacea for every political, if not social evil, is found in a liberal form of government. The fact is overlooked that men, who are eminently creatures of habit, never heartily adopt modes of thinking and acting of which they have had no previous experience, and which are uncongenial to their tastes

and associations. The mass of the people care nothing for abstractions. With them the practical question is, not whether a monarchy or a republic or a despotism is the best, but which will allow, in the present instance, the fullest and safest play to all the intelligence and moral energy they possess. A form of government much in advance of the people always proves to be an evil scarcely less intolerable than one much behind them.

In regard to Christianity as an agent of civilization, Mr. Buckle says but little, and that little is conceived in the spirit of his prevailing theory. When it was first presented to men, they were too benighted to understand it; and when, in the progress of knowledge, they became capable of appreciating its sublime and admirable doctrines, they no longer needed its influence; so that, between too much ignorance at first and too much knowledge at last, it has accomplished nothing for modern civilization. This seems very much like acting the play with the part of Hamlet left out. In taking this view of the case, Mr. Buckle has injured no one but himself. His opinion is, no doubt, honestly and deliberately formed, and we shall not call him hard names because it differs from ours. Had he lived in the days of Gibbon, he would have been greeted with a shower of abusive pamphlets not calculated to recommend to him the divine injunction, "Love thine enemies." But the feeling with which we regard him is more akin to sorrow than to anger, — sorrow that a writer so admirably fitted to appreciate and develop the elevating influence of Christianity should have groped among the inferior agencies of civilization, unconscious of the marvellous power which quietly and slowly, but none the less surely, was imparting to human life a higher aim and a nobler purpose than any older philosophy could furnish.

So much for Mr. Buckle's theory of civilization; for our limits oblige us to pass by many speculations as questionable as any we have noticed. The reader may be surprised, perhaps, that some of these were thought worthy of a critical examination. But some men's errors are of more importance than other men's truths, and it is because Mr. Buckle's errors are so skilfully maintained by his vast learning and vigorous

style, and made subservient to his principal conclusions, that we have given them more attention than their intrinsic value would seem to require.

We have now the more agreeable task of presenting Mr. Buckle in the light of a great historian, tracing the onward march of civilization in England and France by those incidents and influences which strikingly mark its progress. The present being merely an introduction to a much larger work, he selects only a few of the more prominent phases of that great change which has come over those nations within the last three hundred years. Surveying the ground before him, his eye has caught its salient points, and, with a kind of talent which marks an original thinker, he has set them before us in a light that imparts to them a new and stronger significance. Facts accessible to all are made to bear with signal effect upon the question in hand, and, when not too much startled by the boldness of the conclusion, we are rather surprised that it has not occurred to us before. Even this part of his work is not entirely free from the class of notions so prevalent in the other, consisting of some well-settled general principle pushed to an unwarrantable extent, and exciting the special wonder of the reader that one generally so profound can be occasionally so puerile.

The first very decided step in the intellectual progress of England occurred towards the early part of the seventeenth century, when the anile credulity of the past gave place, in some degree, to a spirit of wholesome scepticism. This change was indicated, not only in a growing distrust of unauthenticated marvels in matters of science, but in the recognition of reason as the supreme guide and arbiter in all the disputes of men, especially in matters of religion, which then occupied the public attention far more than questions of philosophy or science. The first formidable protest against the authority of tradition was made by Hooker, who held that the intrinsic excellence of a doctrine is a better ground of belief than the authority of the Fathers. The "Ecclesiastical Polity," appealing, as it did, to the very highest instincts of men, made a profound impression on the public mind, and prepared the way for Chillingworth's bolder onslaught upon the current

principles of the times. The authority of church and of state in matters of religion he totally abjured, and set up the right of private judgment without reservation or abridgment. From the character of God and the nature of man he drew the conclusion, that we should believe only what we can understand, and that the opinions of Fathers and Councils have no force except so far as they are in accordance with reason. The glory of the last step in the inauguration of this great idea, though overlooked by Mr. Buckle, was reserved for an obscure minister while leading his humble flock in the wilds of the New World. Roger Williams not only claimed the absolute freedom of the soul, but for the first time in the history of the world made a practical application of the principle in the formation and government of an existing community. In the hands of others it was little better than a closet speculation, destined, no doubt, to influence opinion; but with him it was an active, tangible reality. Guided by the light of that time, few would have hesitated to predict that his experiment would end in a whirl of fanaticism, infidelity, and confusion. But it was fairly demonstrated that the legitimate fruits of soul-liberty, as he called it, are good order, sound morality, and true religion; and thus, too, was confirmed the suspicion which then began to be entertained, that religious persecution only increases the infidelity and fanaticism which it is designed to prevent. For more than two hundred years that community has existed, favorably comparing with its neighbors in every desirable trait; and yet, in all that time, every man has been at liberty to believe and to worship as he pleased, and all sects have been perfectly equal, in point of privilege, before the law. If doing is better than talking, if practice is better than theory, then we may be allowed to compare the merit of Roger Williams with that of scholars and philosophers whose names have become as familiar as household words.

Such doctrines as Chillingworth's found no favor, of course, with ecclesiastical functionaries, nor with any who courted their support; and the natural result of the variance came at last in the Revolution of 1688,—an event which was the means, not only of enlarging the religious freedom of the

masses, but of exciting inquiry on political subjects, and producing an extension of popular privilege. It so happened, also, that the characters of the reigning sovereigns subsequent to William and Mary considerably weakened that spirit of loyalty which, though never so strong with the English as with the French, was sufficiently so to reconcile them to an arbitrary exercise of the royal prerogative. The same progressive movement was also witnessed in the study of physical science, and in every form of inquiry where a wholesome scepticism could be profitably substituted for the credulity of the sixteenth century. Bacon pointed out the proper objects of knowledge, and gave some practical directions for pursuing them. The Royal Society was one of the first fruits of the new spirit that was abroad; and as some of the early members still lingered in the old ways, they contrasted curiously with those who had studied in a very different school. The same kind of contrast, attributable to the same cause, is exhibited in the very marked difference between the "Religio Medici" and the "Vulgar and Common Errors" of Sir Thomas Browne, which were separated by an interval of about a dozen years. In the former he echoed the exclamation of the holy father, "I believe because it is impossible," and declared there were not impossibilities enough in religion; while in the latter he assailed the popular errors of the time, however consecrated by age or authority, with a boldness which, at the former period, would have been considered marvellous.

A retrospect of intellectual progress in France reveals very similar movements during the corresponding period. In both countries matters of religious belief occupied a large share of public attention; but in the latter they were made the occasion of bigotry, intolerance, and persecution, strongly contrasted with the comparative toleration of the English. While the civil wars of the latter were chiefly political, France, during the sixteenth century, was the theatre of long and bloody conflicts, growing out of religious differences. The reason was, according to Mr. Buckle, that the Reformation, as adopted by Henry VIII., broke the power of the clergy, and with it that paramount interest in religious matters with which they had inspired the people. In France, on

the contrary, the clergy, supported by the civil power, were able to maintain their position, which, while it could not extinguish dissent, imparted to their struggles a hatred and a ferocity almost without parallel. At a later period, however, a degree of scepticism made its appearance, as witnessed in the works of Rabelais, Montaigne, and Charron, and was followed by a certain amount of toleration. Richelieu, who caught the spirit of the age, saw that the greatness of his country would not be advanced by keeping one energetic and enterprising sect in complete subjection to another, and practised a measure of toleration which would have been remarkable even at a much later period. Not only were dissenters allowed to worship God as they pleased, but they were intrusted with the command of armies and the management of negotiations. One of the curious but perfectly natural results of this policy was, that it seduced from their faith the laical Protestant leaders, and thus the control of their affairs fell into the hands of the clergy, who performed their part with a degree of bigotry, intolerance, and narrow-mindedness scarcely credible in modern times. Their synods undertook to regulate the quality and fashion of dress, the amusements, the recreations, and even the names of the people. They prohibited their ministers from studying chemistry, and forbade the publication of books without the sanction of the Church. Where they had the power, they interfered with the worship of their Catholic neighbors, and deprived them of their property. Mr. Buckle pronounces his judgment of these men with his usual boldness, but the time is yet to come, we apprehend, when it will be generally approved.

“If, at this juncture, the Protestants had carried the day, the loss to France would have been immense, perhaps irreparable. For no one who is acquainted with the temper and character of the French Calvinists can doubt, that, if they had obtained possession of the government, they would have revived those religious persecutions which, so far as their power extended, they had already attempted to enforce.” — p. 120.

Fortunately or unfortunately, they did not carry the day, but the Catholics did, and in the exercise of their power they yielded to the ordinary passions of men, and obtained some

distinction in the arts of persecution. The spread of liberal views of religion had the same effect upon other branches of inquiry in France which it had in England.

“During the thirty or forty years which preceded the power of Louis XIV., there was not to be found a single Frenchman of note who did not share in the general feeling, — not one who did not attack some ancient dogma, or sap the foundation of some old opinion.”

The most remarkable exemplification of the new spirit which had risen was witnessed in Descartes, whose appearance forty years before would have been a moral impossibility. The same profound and liberal views which shaped the policy of Richelieu characterized the inquiries of Descartes, and, in place of the ingenious, barren speculations of the age, substituted a profound investigation of the laws of nature and of human existence. In France, as in England, the uprising spirit of doubt and inquiry led, at the same period and for the same reason, to rebellion and war against the constituted authorities. In both, the insurgents were at first successful; but being in advance of their times, the inevitable reaction brought back the old rule and the old principles, greatly improved, no doubt, in England, by the fiery ordeal they had passed through, but in France more intolerant and oppressive than ever. Here the two countries, which thus far had “followed the same order of development in their scepticism, in their knowledge, in their literature, and in their toleration,” began to diverge, and so continued for more than a century, until their separate courses “ended, in England, by the consolidation of the national prosperity; in France, by a revolution more sanguinary, more complete, and more destructive than any the world has ever seen.” The main cause of the phenomenon in question is found by Mr. Buckle in a system of protection, which, in France, has been intimately connected with that love of centralization which appears in the machinery of government, in restrictions upon trade, in interference with literature in the shape of censorship or patronage, and in the regulation of a multitude of things better left to the people themselves. A large portion of the present work is devoted to an examination of the protective



system as it appeared in France and England, where, in Mr. Buckle's opinion, it has been evidently the parent of numberless social and political evils. It would be impossible, within our limits, to present even a sketch of the course of his argument, which is very satisfactorily maintained, and therefore we must be contented with barely showing the spirit in which he has executed his task.

From the fourteenth to the seventeenth century the most important guaranties of the liberties of England were the municipal privileges, the rights of the yeomanry, and the security of the copyholders.

"In France such guaranties were impossible. The real division being between those who were noble, and those who were not noble, no room was left for the establishment of the intervening classes; but all were compelled to fall into one of these two great ranks."

"The result was, that by the fourteenth century the liberties of Englishmen were secured; and since then their only concern has been to increase what they have already obtained. But in that same century, in France, the protective spirit assumed a new form; the power of the aristocracy was, in a great measure, succeeded by the power of the crown; and there began that tendency to centralization which, having been pushed, first under Louis XIV. and afterwards under Napoleon, has become the bane of the French people."

Under the steady operation of this principle, every power worth having was finally absorbed by the government. The people were supposed to be incapable of doing anything for themselves, and even in their most trivial affairs, as well as in the exercise of important privileges, the parental arm of the government was stretched out to direct and control. Lest they might make imprudent wills, the right of bequest was limited. Lest the country might suffer from vagabonds and interlopers, no one was allowed to travel without a passport. Lest they might harm one another in their amusements by indiscretion or carelessness, they were watched over like children; and in their fairs, theatres, and concerts, soldiers were always present to see that no one crowded or picked a quarrel with his neighbor. So, too, in all great public enterprises, the government did everything, the people nothing. If a road were to be made, or a canal dug, or a college or hos-

pital established, the government was appealed to for aid. The principle of competition, which accomplished so much in England, was in France completely overshadowed by the monopoly of the central power. Mr. Buckle's remarks on this state of things are full of truth and wisdom, and should be deeply pondered by all who undertake to speculate on the political future of France.

"The consequence of all this has been, that the French, though a great and splendid people,—a people full of mettle, high-spirited, abounding in knowledge, and perhaps less oppressed by superstition than any other in Europe,—have always been found unfit to exercise political power. Even when they have possessed it, they have never been able to combine permanence with liberty. One of these two elements has always been wanting. They have had free governments which have not been stable. They have had stable governments which have not been free. Owing to their fearless temper, they have rebelled, and no doubt will continue to rebel, against so evil a condition. But it does not need the tongue of a prophet to tell that, for at least some generations, all such efforts must be unsuccessful. For men can never be free unless they are educated to freedom. And this is not the education which is to be found in schools or gained from books; but it is that which consists in self-discipline, self-reliance, and in self-government. . . . The French, always treated as children, are, in political matters, children still. And as they have handled the most weighty concerns in that gay and volatile spirit which adorns their lighter literature, it is no wonder that they have failed in matters where the first condition of success is, that men should have been long accustomed to rely upon their own energies, and that, before they try their skill in a political struggle, their resources should have been sharpened by that preliminary discipline which a contest with the difficulties of civil life can never fail to impart."—p. 575.

The privileges of the nobles, very naturally, had suffered no abatement in France, long after they had been considerably narrowed in England, where a class had been created equally remote from the nobles and the peasants. In this distinction of classes will be found, according to Mr. Buckle, the explanation of the remarkable difference in the result of the two great civil strifes which distracted the two countries in the seventeenth century. Each was a war for liberty; but the elements of the strife were very different. In England it was a

war of classes,—between the yeomanry and the traders on one side, and the nobles and clergy on the other. True, in the early stage of the contest, the former availed themselves, when they could, of the power and prestige of the latter, but the actual leaders were from what we now call the industrial classes. On the contrary, the French rebels were led and controlled by the nobles. The middle and lower classes supplied no leaders, simply because, owing to the protective policy, a bold and sturdy spirit had not been cultivated among them. There was, to be sure, “a display of unexampled splendor; a galaxy of rank, a noble assemblage of aristocratic insurgents and titled demagogues.” But these men with lofty titles had no sympathy with the people whom they led, and whose aims were very different from theirs. “To talk of sympathy existing between the two classes is a manifest absurdity, and most assuredly would have been deemed an insult by those high-born men, who treated their inferiors with habitual and insolent contempt.” Still, the people, even in this uprising against their oppressors, looked up to those above them, and thus confirmed the servility which gave rise to the strife. The nobles, on their part, manifested the same servility towards the throne, whose favors were more coveted than the most brilliant achievements in literature or in arms. The results of a negotiation or a campaign excited less interest among the men of this class, than paltry questions of court privilege; and their disputes as to who should have an arm-chair at court, or be kissed by the queen, or be invited to the royal festivals, or have precedence at coronations, or give the king his napkin at dinner, evinced a degree of warmth and earnestness almost inconceivable now. And thus it was that in the war of the Fronde, as in all other civil wars, there was this constant inclination on the part of the people to look up to the nobles, and on the part of the nobles to look up to the throne. In the English rebellion, on the other hand, all this was very different. The nobles, few of whom were employed at all by the popular party, and those few with a very limited confidence, had never manifested that kind of servility towards the crown, and the people were led by men who had the same great interests at heart.

"What they did was done thoroughly. They knew that they had a great work to perform; and they performed it well. They had risen in arms against a corrupt and despotic government, and they would not stay their hands until they had pulled down those who were in high places; until they had not only removed the evil, but had likewise chastised those bad men by whom the evil was committed."

Mr. Buckle continues his examination of the protective system, by showing its withering effect upon French literature; and in no other part of his work does his historical talent appear in a more favorable light. Louis XIV.'s pompous, empty patronage of men of letters; the utter dearth of discovery or eminence in any department of knowledge during the latter part of his reign, accompanied by the most singular ignorance of whatever was accomplished out of France; the rapid awakening of a healthier spirit towards the middle of the last century; the high-handed, impotent attempt of the government to repress the uprising genius of the country; the sad, strange, erratic movement of the moral and intellectual forces which culminated in the Revolution of 1789, — all are described by Mr. Buckle in a manner not more remarkable for force and fervor of expression, than for extent and minuteness of research.

We would gladly follow Mr. Buckle through his development of this subject, but our limits sternly forbid. Neither can we convey any idea of the admirable sketches, interspersed through his work, of the genius and labors of men whose names are prominent in the history of intellectual achievement. With singular tact he seizes their merits and defects, and, in estimating their influence upon the progress of knowledge, his judgments generally command our assent, except when his tendency to extravagance occasionally leads him to overstate a point. We know nothing better in this way than his notices of Descartes, Burke, Bossuet, Voltaire, and Bichat, though we must protest against the notion, advanced with characteristic recklessness, that, during the last seven or eight years of his life, Burke was unequivocally insane. He adduces no facts in addition to those already published, which, in a criminal case, would hardly convince a court or jury of our own day, even were they far more dis-

posed than they are charged with being, to yield to the plea of insanity.

In the prosecution of his task, we trust that Mr. Buckle will think more of satisfying than startling his readers, and that its general excellence will be less marred by those extravagances of opinion which are equally offensive to sound judgment and to good taste. Let nothing of this kind alloy the pleasure to be derived from a work, which, for manliness of purpose, vigor of thought, wealth of illustration, and energy and fearlessness of expression, is honorable to a generation which boasts of a Hallam and a Macaulay.

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ART. VI.—1. *Mémoires du COMTE MIOT DE MELITO.* 2 vols.

Paris: Michel Levy.

2. *Histoire de la Campagne de 1815. Waterloo.* Par Lieut.-Colonel CHARRAS. London.

3. *Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de mon Temps.* Par M. GUIZOT. Vol. I. Paris: Michel Levy.

4. *Richelieu et la Fronde.* Par MICHELET. Paris.

A MORE interesting work than the Memoirs of Count Miot it has rarely, we think, been the fortune of the public to meet with. It is not only the register of the first Napoleon's progress towards supreme power, kept by a man who, if he was not an ultra Bonapartist, was a determined anti-Royalist, and served Bonapartism; but it shows how the Bonapartist element works out its ends, and may serve as a perfect explanation of much that is now going on in France, and of what Louis Napoleon has planned and executed since he returned to the country he now governs, after the Revolution of 1848. As far as we recollect, these *souvenirs* of Count Miot are the first genuine record given to the public of the actual conduct of Napoleon I. in the transition from the Republic to the Empire. The victor of Marengo and Lodi has hitherto been represented, even by those opposed to his ambition and to its later results, as almost forced by circumstances and by the